



<b>Date:</b>	<b>March 26, 2025</b>
<b>To:</b>	Chair Grayber, Vice Chair Elmer, Vice Chair Muñoz, Members of the House Committee on Labor and Workplace Standards
<b>From:</b>	Mallorie Roberts, legislative affairs director, Association of Oregon Counties
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Opposition to House Bill 2688</b>

Chair Grayber, Vice-Chair Elmer, Vice-Chair Muñoz, and Members of the Committee:

The Association of Oregon Counties (AOC) is a non-partisan member organization that advocates on issues that unite all county governing bodies and have an impact on county functions, governance, budgets, and services.

The Oregon Association of County Engineers and Surveyors (OACES), an affiliate of the AOC, represents Oregon's 36 county public works agencies and road departments across the state. County roads are a critical component of Oregon's integrated road system and are responsible for over 60% of Oregon's non-federal road network, over 32,000 total miles, and 3,400 bridges.

AOC and OACES oppose House Bill 2688. Oregon public works departments support fair payment for county employees and contractors, however we are concerned that applying prevailing wage rates, across such a wide range of essential purchases will increase costs and complexity so significantly that it may delay, postpone, or cancel road maintenance and safety improvement projects. HB 2688 places requirements on the assembly or production of goods, materials, modules, components, structures, supports or fixtures or parts of fixtures, custom, off-site fabrication, electrical systems, masonry and plaster systems, mechanical insulation and more. Public improvement projects as simple as repairing our roadway and as complex as bridge building could be immediately impacted.

Historic inflation, increased labor expenses, labor shortage, and persistent supply chain disruptions for basic construction materials have severely limited the number of projects local governments are able to afford. Oregon county road and public works departments are concerned that applying strict procurement law requirements across such a wide range of public improvement projects will exacerbate budget constraints and labor shortages and reduce critical county construction.

County road departments play a key role in managing Oregon's transportation network, and are grateful to be included in the discussion, as the subsequent policy changes will have a severe impact on counties and public works departments. We hope to have the opportunity for more in-depth conversations going forward regarding cost effective and fair employment practices with the House Committee on Labor and Business.

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